

8.20 WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES (WTF)

(As amended by Ordinance No. 2288 dated December 11, 1997)

- A. The purpose of this section is to establish clear regulations pertaining to wireless telecommunications facilities that are consistent with federal and state law. The City Council of the City of College Station finds that:

It is in the public interest to promote competition in high quality telecommunications services and the availability of broadband transmission services to all residences and business.

It is in the public interest for the City to protect the public safety and welfare, safeguard community land values, promote orderly planning and development and preserve historic sites, structures and areas. Wireless telecommunications facilities should not be allowed to detract aesthetically from the visual quality of surrounding properties or the City.

The proliferation of wireless telecommunications facilities negatively impacts the appearance and character of the community. Therefore the City should endeavor to minimize the size, number and obtrusiveness of antennas and towers. Collocation and stealth technologies are strongly encouraged to mitigate negative visual impacts and reduce the total number of towers within the City.

- B. WTF USE CATEGORIES: In order to expedite the siting and review process, WTF's have been divided into use categories. The review process is more thorough as the intensity of the use increases.

1. UNREGULATED FACILITIES: The WTF's listed below are not regulated by this ordinance and do not require review or approval. This does not exempt these facilities from other applicable city codes, ordinances, and permits.

- a. Direct-to-home service antenna, citizen's radio band antenna, amateur radio antennas.
- b. Parabolic antenna less than 2 meters in diameter.
- c. Omni-directional antenna (whip antenna) 6" or less in diameter and not extending more than 12' above support structure.
- d. Directional antenna 1 meter or less measured across the longest dimension and not extending over 12' above support structure.
- e. Public safety tower or antenna.

2. INTERMEDIATE FACILITIES:

- a. New transmission tower less than 35 feet (10.5 meters) in height.
- b. Parabolic antenna over 2 meters in diameter.
- c. Omni-directional antenna (whip antenna greater than 6" in diameter and/or extending 12' above the support structure.
- d. Directional antenna more than 1 meter measured across the longest dimension and extending over 12' above support structure.
- e. Attached WTF's.

3. MAJOR FACILITIES:

New transmission tower greater than 35 feet (10.5 meters) in height.

- C. GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. ZONING

All Intermediate WTF's are permitted in the following zoning districts:

A-O
A-P
WPC

M-1
R&D
NG

C-1
C-2
C-3

PDD (except PDD-H)
C-B
M-2

Major WTF's are permitted in the following zoning districts:

M-2

Major WTF's are allowed in the following zoning districts with a Conditional Use Permit as discussed in Section D-3:

A-O
A-P

M-1
R&D

C-1
C-2

C-3

2. **SETBACKS:** The standard setbacks for each zoning district will apply to WTF's with additional setbacks or separation being required in the sections below. To protect citizens in their homes, transmission towers shall be placed a distance equal to the height of the tower away from any residential structure or R-1, R-1A, or R-2 zone boundary.
3. **PROXIMITY TO MAJOR THOROUGHFARES:** To preserve and protect the City's major thoroughfares and entrances to the City, additional setbacks are placed on WTF's proposed to be placed near these areas. The setback for these areas is determined by measuring from the centerline of the right-of-way of the thoroughfare. Applicable thoroughfares include freeways and expressways, major arterials and minor arterials, as shown on the Thoroughfare Plan.
 - a. Intermediate WTF's must be 150' from applicable thoroughfares.
 - b. Major WTF's must setback from applicable thoroughfares by the height of the tower x3.
4. **SEPARATION BETWEEN TOWERS:** In order to prevent tower proliferation and protect the City's natural beauty and skyline, the number of transmission towers per square mile has been limited. new transmission towers must be placed a minimum distance from existing towers as described here:
 - a. New transmission towers 35 feet or less in height shall be separated from existing towers by a minimum distance of 1500 feet.
 - b. New transmission towers more than 35 feet and less than 100 feet in height shall be separated from existing towers by a minimum distance of 2500 ft.
 - c. New transmission towers 100 feet or more in height shall be separated from existing towers by a minimum distance of 3500 ft.
5. **HEIGHT LIMITATIONS:** All WTF's are subject to the normal height restrictions for each zoning district where permitted by right. In any zoning district where a tower is a conditional use, the allowable height is determined through the review of the visual impact analysis.

In no case shall a proposed transmission tower exceed 150' within the city limits, except where a height variance is granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustments to allow a tower or antenna that demonstrates a hardship that can only be remedied by locating on a proposed site within the city limits.
6. **LANDSCAPING, SCREENING AND AESTHETIC STANDARDS:** The following requirements shall govern any transmission tower or any parabolic antenna larger than 2 meters.

- a. Landscaping: Refer to Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance. Plant materials and/or fencing that effectively screens the WTF site from view of the public right-of-way will be required.
 - b. New transmission towers shall maintain a flat (not shiny, reflective, or glossy) finish or be painted in accordance with any applicable standards of the FAA (unfinished galvanized steel is not acceptable).
 - c. If an antenna is installed on a support structure other than a tower, the antenna and supporting electrical and mechanical equipment must be of a neutral color that is identical to, or closely compatible with, the color of the supporting structure so as to make the antenna and related equipment as visually unobtrusive as possible.
 - d. WTF's shall not be artificially lighted with the exception of motion detectors as security lighting, unless required by the FAA or other applicable authority. If lighting is required, the City may review the available lighting alternatives and approve the design that would cause the least disturbance to the surrounding properties.
 - e. Towers may not be used to exhibit any signage or other advertising.
7. **SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND OVERLAY DISTRICTS:** Special districts have been established in the City for the purpose of protecting their historical significance and aesthetic qualities. In some cases, WTF's are allowed in these areas with the following restrictions.

To preserve the aesthetic beauty and architectural significance and promote economic growth, intermediate use WTF's (except new transmission towers) are allowed in the listed districts. They shall be placed behind the imaginary front of the most major (largest gfa) structure on site or behind any building face abutting a right-of-way. Additionally, they must be located out of sight of public right-of-way either by screening, strategic siting or stealth technology.

These requirements pertain to the following special districts:

1. Northgate
 2. Wolf Pen Creek
 3. Overlay Districts
 4. PDD (except PDD-H)
 5. C-B\
8. **STEALTH TECHNOLOGY DESIGN:** Any WTF with appropriate stealth technology design approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission may be located in any zoning district. Approved WTF's do not have to meet the additional setbacks for tower separation (section C.4) or thoroughfares (section C.3).
9. **ATTACHED WTF'S:** WTF's may attach to the exterior of any non-residential and non-historic building within any zoning district provided the antenna and antenna support structure or equipment is mounted flush with the vertical exterior of the building or projects no more than 24 inches from the surface of the building to which it is attached and does not raise the height of the building more than 10 feet and does not violate the maximum height restriction of that zoning district. The attached WTF must be textured and colored so as to blend with the surrounding surface of the building.

D. REVIEW PROCESS

1. **WTF REGISTRATION:** All intermediate and major WTF's must be registered with the City. This will allow the City to keep track of all WTF's within the city limits, facilitate the review process and aid in long range planning.

2. **SITE PLAN REVIEW:** Site plans shall be submitted pursuant to the provisions of Section 10 of the zoning ordinance. All property owners within 500 feet of any property line of the host site for the WTF site shall be notified by the Planning Office. In addition to the requirements set forth in Section 10, the following is required:
 - a. A WTF Facility Plan drawing that identifies the location, height, and type of all existing applicant-owned wireless telecommunications facilities in Brazos County and the proposed facility must be submitted.
 - b. The location, type, and height of the proposed facility. At least three collocation alternatives to the applicant's development proposal along with proof of a genuine effort in collocating on or attaching to an existing support structure. A certified letter addressed to potential lessors is required in addition to evidence that demonstrates that no existing tower or support structure can accommodate the applicant's proposed WTF. Any of the following may be submitted as evidence:
 - (1) No existing structures are located within the geographic area required to meet applicant's engineering requirements.
 - (2) Existing structures are of insufficient height to meet applicant's engineering requirements.
 - (3) Existing structures do not have sufficient structural strength to support applicant's proposed antenna and related equipment.
 - (4) Electromagnetic interference would be caused between the proposed and existing facilities.
 - (5) The fees, costs, or contractual provisions required by the owner in order to share an existing structure or to adapt an existing support structure for sharing exceed those for new tower development.
 - (6) The applicant demonstrates that there are other limiting factors that render existing structures unsuitable.
 - c. A visual impact analysis, presented either with drawings or photographs. Four views or elevations shall be submitted looking toward the site (typically north, south, east and west), including site and the surrounding properties measured from the center point of the tower out to a distance equal to three times the height of the proposed tower. This drawing will depict a "skyline" view showing the entire height of the proposed tower and the structures, trees, or any other objects contributing to the skyline profile. The proposed tower, drawn to scale, should be included in the view.
 - d. Certification of compliance with FCC regulations and emission standards.
 - e. Notification of an impending Environmental Assessment required by the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and a copy when the assessment is completed.
 - f. A letter addressed to the City declaring an intent and willingness to construct a proposed tower that would allow at least 2 other service providers to locate there.
3. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:** Some major WTF's must receive a conditional use permit (CUP) (section C.1) under the procedures set forth in Section 14 of the zoning ordinance. In addition to the standard guidelines, the following additional factors shall be considered by the Planning & Zoning Commission when determining whether to grant a CUP for WTF's:
 - a. height of the proposed tower, surrounding topography and surrounding tree coverage and foliage as they relate to:

- (1) skyline impact, examining whether the proportions of the structure appears to dominate or blend in with the surrounding environment.
- (2) shadow impact, whether or not the proposed tower will cast shadows that would prevent the reasonable use of enjoyment of surrounding properties.
- b. design of the tower, with particular reference to design characteristics that have the effect of reducing or eliminating visual obtrusiveness.
- c. proximity of the tower to residential structures and residential district boundaries.
- d. economic impact on adjacent and nearby properties.
- e. proposed ingress and egress.
- f. availability of suitable alternatives and/or existing support structures.

E. ABANDONMENT

Any WTF that is not operated for a continuous period of 12 months shall be considered abandoned, and the owner of such a facility shall remove same within 60 days of receipt of notice from the City notifying owner of such abandonment. If such facility is not removed within said 60 days, the City may, remove such facility at the property owner's expense. If there are two or more users of a single WTF, then this provision shall not become effective until all users cease operations on the tower.

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